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The Alliance of Religion and Learning considered:

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF WESTMORLAND

CHANCELLOR,

AND THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST MARY'S,

ON

ACT SUNDAY, VIII JULY M.DCC.LIX.

BY BENJAMIN BUCKLER, D.D.
FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE.

PUBLISHED BY HIS LORDSHIP's COMMAND.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF WESTMORLAND,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED BY HIS COMMAND,

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS MOST OBEDIENT

MOST HUMBLE SERVANT

B. BUCKLER.

BRITISH MUSEUM

EPH. CH. II. VER. 21.

— In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

THERE is not any part of the character of the chriſtian religion that ought more endearingly to recommend it to the love and eſteem of mankind, than that it is one profeſſed deſign of it, to form the ſtrongeſt connexion of mutual ſupport and friendſhip betwixt its followers. Thus one of the firſt notions we conceive of the church of Chriſt, is that of a ſociety of men knit together in one communion and fellowſhip, and engaged, by the indiſpenſable laws of their great lord and maſter, to co-operate with each other in the offices of charity and benevolence, as heirs of the ſame

promiſes, as members of the ſame body. This very amiable inſtitution we have moſt ſignificantly repreſented to us, in ſeveral places of the new teſtament, by thoſe apt alluſions to that harmony and fit diſpoſition of parts, which conſtitute the beauty and propriety of every well-ordered building; wherein the different members, mutually ſupported by, and ſupporting each other, not only diſcharge their own proper offices, but aſſiſt (to the perfecting of the whole plan,) all thoſe, with which they have the leaſt connexion or dependence. Thus, in the paſſage before us, the apoſtle reminds the *Epheſians*, who had lately had acceſs to the goſpel, of the privileges they enjoyed, by being made members of the church of Chriſt, and of their being *built up together* by this ſocial union. *Ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*

THUS, we ſee, the ſocial duties, in the chriſtian ſyſtem, are not left to be inculcated barely by detached and occaſional precepts, but make

make an eſſential part of the ground-work of our religion, and are interwoven with the firſt principles of it. The whole ſeries of them ariſes to our view, in our firſt conception of a church, or chriſtian commonwealth; and no man can ſay he is a member of it, without acknowleging himſelf, by that very appellation, bound, by the moſt ſolemn obligations, to a conſcientious obſervance and diſcharge of them.

MANY and important are the reflections which might be raiſed from this ſocial genius and tendency of chriſtianity — from its uſefulneſs to the ſupport of our religion — from its benign and amiable influence on the lives and manners of men — from the particular duties it enjoins, and the good conſequences to our temporal and eternal happineſs, from a regular performance of them. But theſe, and many more, as they affect the general character of the chriſtian religion, or relate to us of this place in common with all other members of the church of Chriſt, ſhall be omitted at this ſeaſon, wherein we may be allowed to recollect the advantages we enjoy, as well as the duties incumbent on us, from an additional, and more particular ſocial connexion:

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one indeed, which will be found to have a near correſpondence with, and to be ultimately ſubſervient to the great purpoſes of that divine one we have hitherto mentioned; but as its limits are more confined, and we, who partake immediately of its benefits, may therefore eſteem ourſelves more eſpecially favoured by providence, it cannot but claim the conſtant tribute of our gratitude, and, when admoniſhed by ſuch ſolemnities as call on us to reflect on the nature and deſign of our inſtitution, may demand our particular conſideration.

It ſhall be the buſineſs therefore of this diſcourſe, to apply the words of our apoſtle, and the alluſion contained in them, to the purpoſe of conſidering the alliance which ought always to ſubſiſt between Learning and Religion; the neceſſity of that alliance for the edifying, and *fitly framing together*, the church of Chriſt; the nature and uſefulneſs of ſocieties for the united advancement of them; and the peculiar advantages and happineſs of thoſe whom providence hath called to be members of ſuch ſocieties. And, from a ſhort view of theſe, we ſhall find abundant reaſon, (as well on our own account, as that

of

the church and commonwealth in which we are placed), to recollect, with gratitude, the memory of those who have been the instruments of conveying such blessings to mankind, and to pour out our praises and thanksgivings for them to the great *author and giver of all good gifts.*

When we take a view of the mind of man in its uncultivated state, unassisted by those irradiations which should point out to him his dependence on a Being infinitely superior to himself, and the relations he stands in to those about him; uninstructed at the same time, in any of those arts and accomplishments which furnish the conveniences and embellishments of life, the picture appears so disagreeable, that it would be difficult to persuade us that it bore any resemblance to ourselves, or that a creature so rude and imperfect could be the work of an all-wise and powerful Creator. Nor indeed, though whole nations are now to be found, who are degenerated into this state of deplorable darkness, was this the case of man at the beginning; when God pronounced all his works perfect, and gave him as the chief of all created perfection, to be lord over them. The intimate converse, which the

Almighty condeſcended to hold with our firſt parent, not only impreſſed on him the ſtrongeſt notions of religious dependence and ſubjection, but alſo, as is moſt probable, and as may be collected from the ſacred writings, furniſhed him with every principle of human ſcience, and a thorough inſight into the works of the creation. It is not indeed very eaſy to apprehend wherein his likeneſs to the divine being ſhould conſiſt, unleſs we allow him to have been as replete with all mental perfections, as was requiſite to his rank and ſtation in the univerſe. Religion therefore and the accompliſhments of the mind, which paſs under the general name of Learning, were the birth-right of man in his pure and innocent ſtate; and as he was privileged and enabled to look up to heaven in acts of piety and adoration, ſo he was aſſiſted in doing it by the knowlege he had obtained of the beauty and goodneſs of the works of God on earth. True and genuine Science, (ſuch as was that of our general anceſtor), will always contribute to the ſupport and advancement of Religion, and the religious mind will always be beſt able to correct and amend the ſallies and deficiences of human Learning. The ſoul of man thus endued, or in the language of the text, thus *fitly framed*

framed together, roſe to the higheſt perfection its nature was capable of; it was a building worthy of the Almighty Architect, it was *a holy temple in the Lord.*

But this high and dignified condition of man was of no long continuance. The ſame deviation from duty which alienated him from the favour of God impaired and debilitated his rational faculties; and the mind was no longer the fruitful nurſery of divine and philoſophical truths, which ſprung up ſpontaneouſly in it, but, like the ground which was curſed for his ſake, was ſoon over-run with briars and thorns, and was to be ſubdued and cultivated only by the utmoſt care and labour. In the ſucceeding ages of the world the ſmall remains of light and reaſon, which were here and there ſcattered, were probably contained in traditional precepts and obſervations derived from the firſt man, and ſerved perhaps to give ſome faint directions for the conduct of life to thoſe who ſtudiouſly attended to them; till they were afterwards obſcured by that general irruption of ungodlineſs and folly, which ended in the almoſt total deſtruction of mankind.

From this view of things we cannot but perceive

perceive the uſe and neceſſity of ſome ſocial connexion and aſſiſtance for the ſupport of Learning and Religion, and the recovering in ſome meaſure the dignity of the human mind by inſtructive diſcipline and regular education. As the powers of doubt and error, of folly and vice, have taken ſuch ſtrong poſſeſſion of our natures, it is very requiſite that ſome plan ſhould be formed, and ſome league concerted, for the re-eſtabliſhment of the intereſts of knowlege and virtue.

Let us ſee what the wiſdom of all ages of the church, (both under the jewiſh and chriſtian diſpenſations,) hath thought proper and conducive to this purpoſe; what the ſucceſs of paſt attempts hath been; and in what inſtances, and by what means, they have ſometimes failed. A review, which will ſuggeſt many uſeful reflections to our preſent deſign, without my inſiſting minutely upon them.

It muſt however be premiſed, in this place, that when we ſpeak of Religion as improved and advanced by human diſcipline, it muſt be meant ſo far only as the ſacred depoſitum of revelation hath been preſerved by it in its original purity. True Religion, by which the will

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of God, and the duties required of us, are plainly made known, never was, and never could be the invention and work of man, but came down as an immediate gift from the father of lights: but the means of preſerving this jewel, and diſplaying its luſtre, (excluſive of the influences of the Holy Spirit upon the ſoul,) have been committed, in great meaſure, to the ordinary inſtruments of providence; and, on that account, may be conſidered as part of that mental inſtruction which we receive from each other, and which, as will be ſeen, is beſt maintained by ſocieties of men connected, or *fitly framed together*, for that purpoſe.

THE jewiſh people, to whom was committed the law and the covenant, and to whom God was pleaſed to make himſelf known, by his eſpecial care and ſuperintendence over them as his peculiar nation, were, from their firſt ſettlement in the land of promiſe, furniſhed with ſchools and ſeminaries for the promotion of divine and human Knowlege. But though we read of theſe as high as the times of *Joſhua*, we have no diſtinct account of the nature of their inſtitution, or what regulations their were then under *. Probably they did not,

* Calmet. *Ecoles des Prophetes.*

till

till ſome ages after, riſe to any great degree of perfection; or ſpread their influence in any great meaſure, over the minds and manners of that people; from the conſtant wars they were engaged in with the remnant of the *Canaanites*, or the incurſions of the nations round about them. The great æra of their complete and more ſolemn eſtabliſhment, ſeems to have been the days of *Samuel*; who, retiring from the court of *Saul*, fixed his abode at *Naioth*, and there founded the ſchools of the prophets, and preſided over them [a]. Afterwards in the time of *Elijah*, they were removed, or new ones erected under his patronage and direction at *Bethel* and *Jericho* [b], and under thoſe of his ſucceſſor *Eliſha* at *Gilgal* [c]. The jewiſh writers ſpeak in very high ſtrains of theſe places of Learning and Education; and particularly of the great veneration paid to them, and the privileges they enjoyed. The members of theſe colleges, they tell us, were exempted from all burthenſome offices both civil and military, they were ſupported at the public charge, and the ſeats of their reſidence were held ſacred, and had the rights of ſanctuary allowed them. Hence it is ſaid, *David* choſe *Naioth* as the ſafeſt place of refuge from the perſecutions of

a 1 Sam. xix. 18. b 2 Kings ii. 3, 5. c 2 Kings iv. 38.

Saul.

Saul. And may we not ſuppoſe that he owed ſomething more than his bare ſafety to this retreat? might not the genius of the royal pſalmiſt receive ſome ſhare of its improvement from the precepts of *Samuel*; or might it not here firſt catch thoſe flames of piety and devotion, which ſo conſpicuouſly ſhine forth in his writings? It is certain, however, that one of the chief employments of the perſons educated in theſe academies was that of compoſing hymns to the Deity, and rehearſing them to muſic. They were, beſides, inſtructed in the principles of moral and natural philoſophy, in the writings and doctrines of *Moſes*, and in the jewiſh polity.

UNDER theſe inſtitutions the ſtate of Religion and Learning among the *Hebrews* was greatly improved and promoted; ſo that after the return from the Babyloniſh captivity, when this ſcheme was enlarged by *Ezra* in the erection of ſynagogues, (each of which had its ſchool belonging to it), an utter end was put to that defection to idolatry, to which that people had been addicted ever ſince their deliverance from the ſlavery of *Egypt* ‡.

‡ ACCORDING to *Lightfoot*, the forty eight cities of the *Levites* were likewiſe ſo many univerſities, where the miniſterial tribe,

FROM *Ezra* there followed a ſucceſſion of men, whom we generally find diſtinguiſhed by the title of the elders of the great ſynagogue. By the labours of theſe, and by their ſkill in hiſtory and criticiſm, the canon of the jewiſh ſcripture was completed and publiſhed; and the cloſe of this ſucceſſion, (which happened about the 300th year before Chriſt,) makes that point of time when their Religion was beſt underſtood and practiſed, and when Learning had attained to its greateſt height amongſt them.

BY what means they deſcended from theſe attainments, and admitted a general corrup-

tribe, diſtributed in companies, ſtudied the law, became learned, and thence ſcattered through the whole nation, diſperſed Learning, and the knowlege of the law in all the ſynagogues.

THE tithes were granted to the prieſts and *Levites*, not only when they miniſtered at the altar, or in the temple, but when they ſtudied in the univerſities and preached in the ſynagogues.

BEHOLD (continues he) the method of God's own inſtitution! God chuſeth *Iſrael* to be a peculiar people to himſelf: To this choſen people he gives a law and a clergy: On the clergy he enjoins the ſtudy of the law: To their ſtudies he ſuits *academical ſocieties*: On the univerſities he beſtows lands and tithes: On the ſynagogues he beſtows tithes and univerſity men. Dr. *Lightfoot's* Works, Vol. II. p. 86.

tion.

tion of ſcience and morals, cannot be conſidered with its due accuracy in a diſcourſe of this nature. It will be ſufficient, for our preſent purpoſe, to obſerve that, by their diviſion into ſects and parties, they unhappily loſt ſight of that ſober and edifying diſcipline, which, to the benefit of their church and nation, had for ſome time been eſtabliſhed amongſt them. By one of theſe ſects the word of God was ſet at nought, and made of none effect, by their zeal for what they called the tradition of the elders, and their utter neglect of the moral law; in the place of which they ſubſtituted a very rigorous obſervance of the ceremonial. By another, the doctrines of *Epicurus* were openly held and taught, and thoſe of a reſurrection and a future judgment, (the great ſafeguards of virtue,) oppoſed and ridiculed. Theſe two grew and multiplied, and drew the people after them; ſo that, when our Saviour came on earth, the jewiſh church was torn in pieces, on the one hand by a licentiouſneſs that bordered upon atheiſm, and, on other, by an hypocriſy almoſt as dangerous to Religion as atheiſm itſelf.

THE appearance of the Son of God, and the promulgation of a new Religion to the

world by him and his apoſtles, is a tranſaction of providence in which human ſcience had no ſhare. It is that boundary betwixt the two œconomies, of the jewiſh and chriſtian churches, which rejects all the ordinary aſſiſtances of Learning and Policy, and aſſerts itſelf to be all miraculous and divine.

YET it may be obſerved of this point of time, that it was highly charactered by that people whoſe conqueſts and empire had overſpread the world, for the moſt eminent improvements of the powers and faculties of the mind. And we may perhaps be allowed to ſuppoſe, that for this, among other reaſons, God made choice of that age as beſt prepared for the reception of that ineſtimable gift, the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

IN conſequence hereof the goſpel made its ſpeedieſt and moſt direct advances to the chief fountains of that light, which had been kindled and diffuſed in order to attend its introduction into the world. It did not confine itſelf to that more obſcure corner, from whence it drew its original, till a more favourable age of darkneſs might ſuffer it to ſteal abroad undiſcuſſed and unexamined, but was preached by

by the immediate meſſengers of its author at *Rome*, *Corinth*, and *Athens*; to men [a] *buſied in nothing elſe but hearing and telling ſome new* diſcovery of reaſon and philoſophy, and many of them ready to liſten, and *hear again* [b], before they decided on any matter of importance.

And, whatever portion of ſupernatural aid might be neceſſary to the two or three ſucceeding centuries, it is certain that even in the apoſtolic age, the alliance began to be regularly formed again betwixt Learning and Religion. Some of the moſt early converts to chriſtianity and defenders of it by their writings, were ſuch as had been bred up in all the knowlege of the *Gentiles* and made great uſe, in their apologies, of the beſt ſort of the heathen philoſophy; and the ſchool of St. *Mark* at *Alexandria*, which flouriſhed through the firſt ages of the goſpel, ſupplied thoſe champions of the faith (ſuch as were *Clemens*, *Origen*, and *Athanaſius*,) to whom the primitive church owed, under God's good providence, the conſervation of the purity of its doctrines.

The times which followed afford us a

a Acts xvii. 21. b Ibid. ver. 32.

frightful ſcene of the triumphs of ignorance and barbarity, from the ruin of the roman ſtate, and the incurſions of the northern nations. In thoſe evil days Religion, diſtreſſed and affrighted, took ſhelter in the cloyſter; but in ſuch company, and under ſuch patronage, that her ſiſter Learning diſdained to follow her. Theſe were the ages in which the biſhops of *Rome* ſeized the favourable opportunity of aſſerting their incroachments, and introducing the corruptions of popery. They were the long, dark, night of the church, in which the enemy came and ſowed tares among the wheat, and deſtroyed all the hope of the harveſt. How ſad and deplorable was the ignorance of our own nation during this period, may be learned from ſome of our hiſtorians, who repreſent every kind of Literature as loſt and ſunk, as laid aſleep and almoſt dead *; and the clergy themſelves, *whoſe lips ſhould have preſerved knowlege* [a], as unqualified to perform the common offices of their function ‡.—Thus

* — Literaturæ ſtudium ſopitum et pene mortuum. *Guil. Malmeſb.* Lib. 2. *de Geſtis Anglorum.*

a Malac. ii. 7.

‡ The following melancholy account is given us by Ælfred himſelf: — Adeo funditus concidit (ſcil. doctrina) apud gentem Anglicanam, ut pauciſſimi fuerint cis Humbrum, qui vel preces ſuas communes in ſermone Anglico intelligere potuerint, vel ſcriptum

it was with us till towards the end of the ninth century, when Ælfred, like another *Samuel*, aroſe, and gathering together the ſcattered remains of Learning, connected them into one ſocial ſtate, and in theſe favourite ſeats, by the influence of his bounty and example, reſtored, or rather firſt founded, the ſchools of the prophets. It was not long before the good effects of his eſtabliſhments proclaimed themſelves to the world, for within little more than half a century from their firſt ſettlement, we meet with many learned names among the ſuperior clergy, and by the patronage of two of them (I mean *Dunſtan* and *Æthelwold* §,) Learning about this time, began to be introduced into ſome of the monaſteries. The progreſs it made in them, and in other foundations more eſpecially calculated for its Cultivation, which from the munificence and piety of princes and prelates aroſe, from time to time, in this and its ſiſter univerſity, (though to our more enlightened days it may appear but mean and deſpicable,) was no ſmall embelliſhment to the

tum aliquod e Latino in Anglicum transferre: tam ſane pauci fuerunt, ut ne unum quidem recordari poſſim ex auſtrali parte Thameſis, tum cum ego regnare occœperam. *In præfatione Paſtor. Greg.*

§ The former of theſe was archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, the latter biſhop of *Wincheſter*, *circ.* A. D. 960.

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four or five ſucceeding ages. It was not, however, till the fifteenth century that it made its moſt ſucceſsful effort; when, by a happy combination of circumſtances, the ſtores of antient Science were laid open, and the approaches to them made acceſſible to every common degree of genius and induſtry. The light that began to ſpread over the weſtern church by theſe means ſhewed the way for Religion to emerge out of darkneſs; and the next age brought about the reformation.—If at any time ſince that period, Religion hath been diſgraced by the abſurdities and phrenzies of enthuſiaſm; if her doctrines have been miſunderſtood and perverted to the worſt of purpoſes, and the decency of her outward garb and diſcipline defiled and profaned; it was THEN when Learning too underwent the like cruel treatment; when ſhew as deſpiſed and inſulted, and the moſt forcible attempts were made even to drive her from theſe habitations, which, for many ages, ſhe had claimed as her inheritance.

MUCH happier days, however, ſoon ſucceeded; and the advances that have been ſince made, in eſtabliſhing the truth and certainty of the chriſtian diſpenſation, and in diffuſing the purer

purer knowlege of it; in the cultivation of a rational philoſophy and the improvement of every politer art and ornament of life; have perhaps extended themſelves as far as the ſtrength of the human mind is capable of conducting its reſearches. Happy were it for us, if this profuſion of divine and human light were not obſcured and affronted by the general licentiouſneſs of our morals, and an eager deſire in many to diſbelieve, againſt all conviction, that religion which alone can ſupport the dignity of our nature, and add the moſt ſolid comfort and ſatisfaction to the mind. For, after all, it is to be feared, that an ingenuous love of truth, and a conformity of the heart and affections to whatever ſhall appear to be the will of God, (which ſhould always accompany our religious enquiries,) have not kept ſo equal a pace with the advancements of the underſtanding, as to make one part of the character of the age we live in.

We have ſeen then, from this ſlight account of things, that it ſeems to be the purpoſe of Almighty God, and the ſettled ſcheme of his providence, that religious knowlege ſhould, in ſome ſort, keep pace with the other improvements of the ſoul; that the ſtate of the

church

church is not *fitly framed together*, unleſs this connexion be ſupported betwixt divine and human Learning; that, when either of them hath been loſt or corrupted, the other hath withdrawn its ſhining; and that when one of them, in any age, hath ariſen to any great degree of eminence, the other hath not long forgotten to move on towards perfection, and to arrive at the ſame rank of ſplendor. It ſeems, indeed, to be the proper reward of the mind's exerting itſelf in the acquiſition of any laudable accompliſhments, that heaven ſhould open itſelf to its enquiries; or that when divine things, (the knowlege of God and his righteouſneſs,) have been firſt embraced and cheriſhed by it, the inferior attainments ſhould be added unto them.

And yet, we know it hath been aſſerted "that the reſurrection of letters was a fatal pe-"riod to the chriſtian Religion," and "that "Chriſtianity has been in decay ever ſince "that period*."—The ſuggeſtion indeed is a bold one, and carries ſomething very threatening in its countenance; but, if we read a little farther, and examine upon what it is founded, it will amount only to this, "That

* Lord *Bolingbroke*, Letter V.

"many

"many facts, piouſly believed in former times, "and upon which the truth of chriſtianity has "been reſted very imprudently in more en- "lightened ages," by ſome unwary defenders of it, "have been ſubverted or rendered very "precarious by a ſtrict, but juſt, application "of the rules of criticiſm." Which is no more than to ſay, (what ſhall be very readily granted, for it makes directly for our purpoſe,) that the uſe of true critical Learning hath diſperſed many of the clouds; with which ſuperſtition, ignorance, and credulity, had obſcured and diſfigured the face of Religion.

We have ſeen likewiſe, that this connexion hath received its chief ſupport and aſſiſtance from thoſe aſſociations which the munificence, wiſdom, and piety of paſt ages have formed for this purpoſe. The many ſocieties of this kind, which adorn theſe ſeats of Learning, would, were we to examine their annals, or any hiſtory of the progreſs of Religion and Literature amongſt us, ſtand forth as ſo many inſtances of the truth of this obſervation. It is with Science as with commerce; the labours and difficulties which attend each of them are beſt overcome by the multiplicity of perſons and capacities employed in them; and the variety

of reſearches, which would have diſſipated or diſtracted the mind of one man, are eaſily pervaded, when the work is diſtributed, and every one hath his ſeparate ſhare allotted to him. When indeed the firſt conqueſt is gained, and the track marked out for future adventurers, and no improbable conjectures formed for farther attainments, the difficulty of the taſk will be diminiſhed; and the profits and advantages be within the reach of common genius and induſtry: But ſtill the ſociety and common ſtock are to be ſupported; new aſſiſtants muſt, from time to time, be initiated in the ſame diſcipline; and every art and myſtery will be beſt taught, where it was firſt invented or perfected.

We may obſerve, to the advantage of thoſe ſocieties which make up the aggregate body of each univerſity; that the Alliance between Learning and Religion is the profeſſed principle on which they are founded. This was not the caſe of the monaſteries. In them Learning was merely adventitious and accidental; and (except in a very few of them,) was no part of the deſign and inſtitution of thoſe eſtabliſhments. And this, no doubt, was one great reaſon why Religion, thus left to herſelf, ſucceeded

ceeded ſo unfortunately in them. The mind, accuſtomed to one unanimated round of devotion, without being relieved, or having its views opened, by the politer ſtudies and a rational philoſophy, either loſt all its faculties and ſunk down into a droniſh ſtupidity; or contracted that gloomineſs or propenſity to viſion and ecſtaſy, which ſoon terminated in ſuperſtition or enthuſiaſm.

It will readily occur to every one of us, who have taſted the advantages of this ſocial union, how properly circumſtanced theſe eſtabliſhments are, for promoting the great purpoſes of their inſtitution; from that freedom and diſembaraſſment we enjoy from the common cares and concerns of the world. The excruciating reflection on the precarioufneſs of a future ſubſiſtence, and the uncertainty of attaining that ſtate of eaſe and tranquility ſo neceſſary to the learned and contemplative life, which ſo frequently haraſſes the minds of thoſe who are engaged in it, is ſufficient to repreſs the efforts of the ſtrongeſt genius and the livelieſt imagination. Add to this, that ſince the increaſe of knowlege hath neceſſarily been attended with the increaſe of authors in every branch of it; the very apparatus of Learning is not

now attainable, but by thoſe who are poſſeſſed, in ſome degree, of the affluence of fortune. It is ſurely therefore no contemptible circumſtance, to be placed in that ſituation where the comforts and conveniences of life are dealt out to us with a decent, though frugal, plenty; and the requiſites to our literary improvements are ſupplied with a noble and ſplendid munificence.

To this conſideration, of our freedom from the cares and troubles of the world, may be added, what is ſtill more valuable; our detachment from a too early converſe with the manners and corruptions of it. To have our entrance into it well guarded, and thoroughly ſeaſoned with religious and virtuous principles, is, perhaps, the greateſt bleſſing which providence can beſtow on us in this life; and the beſt ſecurity for our paſſing through it with ſatisfaction to ourſelves, and with credit and honour to our friends and country. The knowlege of the world, I mean what generally paſſes under that name, which is gained by mixing in ſcenes of public buſineſs; by a conſtant intercourſe with mankind and an inſight into the prevailing follies and vices of it; is ſo dangerous a ſcience, that it ought never to be attempted

attempted till the mind hath been raiſed, by a long courſe of ſerious diſcipline, to a thorough contempt for all mean and unworthy compliances. This diſcipline is, we hope we may ſay, to be attained in theſe ſeats of education; where a few years ſpent, according to the true and original deſign of them, in the contemplation of wiſdom and virtue, will prevent us from being drawn aſide by the ſplendor of any thing that is great; or the fancying any thing to be ſo that hath not its excellency founded in theſe. Thus endued, and thus fortified, the man who goes out from us, will be ſo far from being corrupted with the vices of the world, that he will be, within his ſphere, the inſtrument of providence for reforming and diſcountenancing them: And will likewiſe, at the ſame time, reflect back no little honour on the place from whence he came ſo well inſtructed; by maintaining through life, in one ſteady and uniform courſe of action, the dignity of a learned education, united to the courage and conſtancy of a religious one.

THERE is not, perhaps, a greater incentive to a vigorous exertion of our abilities in the attainment of any worth or excellence; than the reflection of our being, in any manner, connected

nected with thoſe, who have before us trod the ſame paths of virtue or knowlege, with ſucceſs and reputation. Thus to remind men, who are nobly deſcended, of the famous atchievements of their anceſtors, is a very common, and a very cogent method of perſuaſion to a generous mind, to make its beſt efforts to ſupport the hereditary character; and to tranſmit one more example to the imitation of poſterity. The ſame argument may, with equal propriety, be addreſſed to thoſe, whoſe lot it is, in theſe families of Learning and Virtue, to have their conduct formed on the plan, and ſhaped by the example, of ſome very able proficient; and to fill the places of thoſe, who before them, in their ſeveral generations, have diligently followed his ſteps. In ſuch ſituations there is a character to be ſuſtained, the reflection on which will ſometimes neceſſarily occur to the mind; and the leaſt reflection on it will not fail of having its proper effect.

And here we may affirm, that there are none of the ſocieties in this commonwealth of Learning, but what may in ſome meaſure boaſt, how much the characters of thoſe, whoſe bounty hath been handed down to them, were formed for the purpoſes of example;

ample; and to add a very eminent degree of luſtre to their reſpective foundations. Their characters were made up of Learning and Piety; and that profuſion of their liberality which hath ſpread itſelf to us, aroſe from their perceiving the connexion which theſe two will always have with each other; and the propriety of forming ſocieties for the united ſupport of them. And it ought to be attended to; that this obſervation was produced from their own experience of the wants and exigencies of the church and nation. For they were not men whoſe days had been ſpent in the idle amuſements of a literary obſcurity; but had many of them been employed in the concerns of ſtate, and for a great part of their lives were converſant in the courts and counſels of princes.

FROM ſuch ſituations, and circumſtances, their deſigns became much more large and extenſive than thoſe, which had been favoured by the patrons of the monaſtic life. They conſidered the univerſity as the mart of general Science and Erudition; not as deſigned merely for the education of the clergy, and that the man of God alone might be perfect; but that each of the learned profeſſions,

every

every liberal art that can adorn the civil and ſocial life, and furniſh out the the philoſopher, or the ſtateſman, ſhould receive its due ſhare of culture. And to this purpoſe one, who ſtands in a very reſpectable rank among them, (and for whoſe ſentiments ſome degree of partiality might be pardonable in me,) expreſſes himſelf at the very opening of his plan of domeſtic diſcipline and government: "That as the uni-
"verſity had been accuſtomed to educate her
"ſons not only in the arts and philoſophy, but
"in divinity, which is the miſtreſs of them all,
"and in the ſtudy of the laws, which are ſo
"uſeful and neceſſary for the political govern-
"ment of the nation; he had determined that
"his Society, which he had diſtinguiſhed by
"its ſituation in the very boſom of its mo-
"ther, ſhould like a dutiful daughter, in con-
"formity to her example, inſtruct her chil-
"dren in all that variety of Sciences and Fa-
"culties *."

To cheriſh, to promote, and render as influential as poſſible theſe important purpoſes, is the duty of thoſe who have taſted of the liberality of founders and benefactors; and to

* Statut. Coll. Omn. An. Rubric. 1. De totali numero ſociorum, et ſcholarium in diverſis ſcientiis ſtudentium.

whom

whom the execution of their plans and intentions hath been entruſted. And here indeed we hope it will always be remembered, that the ſacred charge of Religion demands the firſt and principal care. Of every chriſtian ſeminary of Learning, as well as of the church in general, *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is the chief corner-ſtone.* To build up therefore one another on this foundation, and in his faith; to cultivate the pure and perfect knowlege of it; to defend it from the inſults of impiety and infidelity, and the madneſs of enthuſiaſm; will ever be the higheſt glory of ſuch inſtitutions, whilſt they have any reſpect to their original character. To theſe purpoſes every other courſe of diſcipline and inſtruction will ſubmit, none of them will be averſe, and many of them will be ſubſervient. Far be it therefore from the academical defender of chriſtianity to entertain the leaſt jealouſy of any enmity between reaſon and revelation; or to ſuppoſe, that the faculties of the human mind, improved by ſober culture and a rational philoſophy, cannot be employed without danger, in diſcuſſing the evidences of our moſt holy Religion.

But to embrace and adopt, with gratitude and chearfulneſs, every other branch of inſtruc-

that may do honour to this ſeat of education, will, we are confident, be the next care of thoſe who, in any ſort, preſide in its government, or have the conduct of its diſcipline. In an age when a more generous train of thinking ſeems to have prevailed amongſt the learned profeſſions, and in this place, where *wiſdom hath builded her houſe*[a], and laid out her apartments ample enough for the reception of all her attendants, they will all be admitted to the ſame ſocial privileges; and no exceptions will be formed, which may ſavour in the leaſt of the monaſtic ſuſpicion and reſervedneſs.

OUR whole building, *thus fitly*, and elegantly, *framed together*, will never be the aſylum of dullneſs and ignorance, or the more deteſted haunt of profaneneſs and infidelity. This fruitful mother, of many happy children, will always be prepared to give her ſons to the church, and to the common wealth *thoroughly furniſhed unto every good work*[b]; and replete with every well digeſted principle of religious truth, ſocial virtue, and civil liberty. The noble and generous youth entruſted to her (ſo eminently, at this time, diſtinguiſhed for their

a Prov. ix. 1. b Tim. iii. 17.

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conformity to her diſcipline, and the ornament they have added to her triumph,) convinced, in every ſtage of active life, of what importance ſhe is to the public welfare, ſhall ſtand foremoſt amongſt her guardians and protectors, whenever her ſafety ſhall be endangered. The real patriot, indeed, can know no difference between aſſiſting in her preſervation, and in that of the Religion and Conſtitution of his country; whilſt ſhe thus ſupports, as we truſt ſhe always will, a reputation worthy of the great and good purpoſes of her inſtitution, and of THAT PATRONAGE, which ſhe hath lately ſo happily aſpired to, and obtained.

THE END.

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